

Archaeological Site Etiquette

Utah is fortunate to have many fine examples of rock art, and a rich archaeological heritage. Our past, however, is being threatened by people who collect artifacts and dig sites as well as by those who vandalize rock art panels.

Many visitors do not realize that collecting artifacts, digging sites and defacing rock art have several harmful results. These actions destroy data, attack Native American cultural heritage, and rob other people from the opportunity to appreciate and understand other cultures and human history. If you see people vandalizing sites, please report it as soon as possible by calling 1-800-VANDALS. Obtain as much information about the people without putting yourself in danger.

If you find something that appears particularly interesting or possibly valuable, contact the BLM (Tel: 801/539-4001 in Salt Lake City). This applies especially to human remains which have occasionally weathered out.

Do your part to help preserve archaeological sites!

1. Touching rock art will leave oils from your fingers that may speed the rock's natural deterioration process.
2. Making paper rubbings or tracings may crumble rock art
3. Making latex molds of rock art should only be done by professionals if the rock art is going to be destroyed by construction or development.
4. Building fires nearby can cause serious damage from smoke and high temperature.
5. Do NOT take it home. Collecting is illegal and punishable by law.
6. Chalking is harmful to the rock art, and makes it impossible to use new methods of dating the figures.
7. Re-pecking or re-painting a difficult-to-see image doesn't restore it, but rather destroys the original.
8. Defacement. Insensitive people often paint their names over rock art, or shoot bullets at it. Defacement is a sign of disrespect for other cultures.

9. Tunnel vision. People like rock art so much, they often forget to watch where they are walking and may trample or damage important artifacts.

10. Removal/ rearrangement of artifacts often destroys archaeological data. Artifacts should be left where they are found.

11. Ground Disturbance. Any digging at an archaeological site is not allowed. Visitors should tread as lightly as possible, especially on loose slopes and under rock overhangs. Always stay on designated roads and trails.

(Adapted from *Intrigue of the Past* and Hurst and Pachak, 1989, pp. 25-26).